

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 H-01 NSC-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7578

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T ATHENS 1491

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR

SUBJECT: DEFMIN AVEROFFS REQUEST FOR LETTER REGARDING

US USE OF SOUDHA AB

REFS: (A) ATHENS 1367; (B) CJUSMAGG 201455Z FEB 75

SUMMARY: AVEROFF'S REQUEST FOR A LETTER DENYING "RUMORS" OF US RESUPPLY OPERATIONS TO OTHER COUNTRIES THROUGH SOUDHA AB WAS REITERATED TO CJUSMAGG. WE SEE SERIOUS PITFALLS IN COMPLYING WITH THIS REQUEST, NOT LEAST OF WHICH ARE IMPLICATIONS FOR MAC OPERATIONS THROUGH ATHENAI AB. WE PROPOSE IN LIEU OF A LETTER TO PROVIDE ORAL ASSURANCES TO AVEROFF AS MINIMUM WE NEED IN EFFORT TO REVIEW OPERATIONS AT SOUDHA AB. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING COURSE OF FEB 18 MEETING WITH DEFMIN AVEROFF (SEE REF A) HE RESPONDED TO SUGGESTION THAT RESTRICTIONS ON US FLIGHT OPERATIONS AT SOUDHA AB BE LIFTED, AT LEAST TO PERMIT LEVEL PROVIDED FOR IN 1959 AGREEMENT, BY REFERRING TO GREEK FEARS THAT USG HAD USED THIS BASE TO RESUPPLY TURKEY, A FEAR WHICH HE PROFESSED NOT TO SHARE. HE THEN EXPRESSED THE THOUGHT THAT A LETTER TO HIM DENYING "RUMORS THAT US HAD USED SOUDHA AB TO RESUPPLY THIRD COUNTRIES" MIGHT BE HELPFUL, IMPLICITLY IN REOPENING SOUDHA AB FOR US FLIGHTS. IN MEETING FEB 19 WITH CHIEF

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JUSMAGG, ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFIED IN REF B, HE REITERATED HIS

DESIRE TO RECEIVE A LETTER AS DISCUSSED THE PRECEDING DAY
AND SET IN TRAIN CONTACTS WHICH WE TRUST WILL RESULT IN
RESUMPTION OF MINIMAL LEVEL OF FLIGHT ACTIVITY AT SOUDHA AB.

2. ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT COMMIT OURSELVES TO PROVIDE LETTER,
NEITHER DID WE REJECT THE CONCEPT. UPON REFLECTION, HOWEVER,
WE BELIEVE THAT PROVIDING SUCH A LETTER WOULD CREATE A PRECEDENT
WHICH WE OUGHT TO AVOID. ALTHOUGH TO OUR KNOWLEDGE SOUDHA AB
HAS NOT BEEN USED FOR RESUPPLY FLIGHTS TO TURKEY, THERE
PRESUMABLY IS SOME HOPE THAT UNDER APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES
IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO UTILIZE THIS AIRFIELD IN CERTAIN
MIDDLE EAST CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS. ALTHOUGH IN OUR
JUDGMENT THE CHANCES THAT THE GOG WOULD ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN
ARE NOT GREAT, WE PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT WISH TO BE ON RECORD
DISCLAIMING THIS AS A PAST AND, BY EXTRAPOLATION, A FUTURE
ACTIVITY. MAC FLIGHTS THROUGH ATHENAI AB EASTWARD WOULD
APPEAR ALSO TO BE AFFECTED BY SUCH A LETTER, IN THAT HAVING
AGREED TO SUPPLY SUCH A LETTER FOR SOUDHA AB WE WOULD BE
HARD PUT TO DENY A SIMILAR STATEMENT CONCERNING OUR USE OF
THIS AIRFIELD. INDEED, AVEROFF MIGHT BE UNINFORMED (OR
CLEVER) ENOUGH TO HAVE HAD ATHENAI AB IN MIND ALL
ALONG.

3. HAVING HEARD, FOR THE FIRST TIME, OF FEARS ABOUT OUR
PAST USE OF SOUDHA AB TO RESUPPLY TURKEY, WE CANNOT ALLOW
THE MATTER TO REST. WE PROPOSE RATHER THAN PROVIDING A
LETTER TO PROVIDE ORAL ASSURANCES TO AVEROFF THAT WE HAVE
NOT USED SOUDHA AB TO RESUPPLY TURKEY AND THAT THE VERY
NATURE OF OUR OPERATIONS THERE IS INCONSISTENT WITH THIS
POSSIBILITY. IF DEPT DOES NOT CONCUR IN THIS LINE OF ACTION,
PLEASE ADVISE PROMPTLY. WHAT WE SAY WHEN THE SAME QUESTION IS
ASKED ABOUT OUR FLIGHT OPERATIONS THROUGH ATHENAI AB IS ANOTHER
MATTER, AND THERE APPREARS TO BE A STRONG CHANCE THAT
RESTRICTIONS ON WHAT MAC FLIGHTS TRANSITING THIS BASE MAY
CARRY EASTWARD WILL SURFACE AS A GREEK OBJECTIVE IN THE
NEGOTIATIONS ON ATHENAI AB.
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